

COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

CHILCOTT *af*

LUND *SA*

THOMPSON *AT*

TAYLOR (Clerk & Recorder)

Date.....September 18, 2006

Members Present.....Commissioner Greg Chilcott, Commissioner Betty Lund and Commissioner Alan Thompson

Minutes: Sally Fortino and Glenda Wiles

Commissioner Thompson was in court for a case involving the county.

The Board of County Commissioners met with Public Health Nurse Judy Griffin and members of the Board of Health regarding the medical needs in the Detention Center. Commissioner Thompson was absent for this meeting. Sheriff Hoffman was unavailable due to the court case. Dr. Bender was present for the meeting, along with Environmental Health Director Theresa Blazicevich, Board of Health Members Roger DeHaan, John Swanson, Patti Eldredge, and Ellyn Jones.

Judy updated the Commissioners on the present state of the County Health Officer position, recently vacated by Dr. Egleston. Dr. Bender is considering the position, along with other offers, and Judy felt the Commissioners should strive to expeditiously determine the boundaries and the duties involved in the position, as the County residents deserve the coverage of that officer.

Commissioner Chilcott asked if Dr. Bender has met with the Sheriff. Dr. Bender said he has, but is not sure the Sheriff understands the extent of health care needs within the detention community. The job description decisions must be made before he can make a decision on the job. Dr. Bender felt the county health position must be filled for the good of the community. He also stated he has no problems helping to figure out the medical needs in the detention facility. He felt other matters can be addressed as they arise. The City may also need a health care officer in the future.

John said this job needs to be filled; the residents shouldn't have to wait for details to be ironed out before the position is filled. Commissioner Lund said the salary is low, and asked if Dr. Bender would be willing to get started and iron out the details later.

Judy said Dr. Egleston was called upon when emergencies arose. Sometimes it was difficult for him to handle everything. Theresa said he often worked with Environmental

Health to educate people on the importance of issues. Judy said methamphetamine houses are also becoming an issue. DEQ has received complaints. Commissioner Chilcott said the DEA and the State should be involved in such issues.

Dr. Bender said doing a good job requires a pro-active attitude. Interactions with the Board of Health, the hospital, emergency preparedness, etc. are all required to be proactive.

Commissioner Chilcott noted there is good coordination between the Departments of Health and Detention. Dr. Bender's emergency room experience cuts through a lot of issues that will help the county. The County is mandated to provide health care to the community and mental health care to the people in jail. The standard of care we need to meet is defined in the standards; many try to abuse the system. If someone is willing to jump in with both feet, Commissioner Chilcott felt the county should make better use of the dollars available.

John asked if the Board of County Commissioners and the Sheriff's Department agree regarding needs. Commissioner Chilcott said they are presently in the process of defining those issues within the budget. John asked if all the nuances of the job, as it pertains to the jail, have been worked out or is it really just budget issues. Is the perception within the two departments sufficiently unified to think about merging the two positions? Commissioner Chilcott said blending the two positions is the best solution. From a fiscal position it is best, too. The medically uneducated would have difficulty discerning between jail standards and medical standards of care for detainees. If the county hires Dr. Bender, \$18,000-\$20,000 presently budgeted could be eliminated in those detention services.

John said the situation should not be allowed to continue. Money is spent to take care of prisoners in an inefficient manner, in terms of dollars.

Dr. Bender commented on the size of the job, including the fact that the person is basically on call 24 hours a day. He said a well-qualified individual would require a decent wage. Commissioner Chilcott said the Board of County Commissioners would consider turning this into a full time position for a physician.

Roger stated it sounds as if the issue in the Detention Facility is currently an 'unknown' and perhaps the health officer would be able to help with those decisions. A doctor is equipped to determine what health care issues can be handled at the jail and what falls beyond the scope of its abilities for treatment.

Commissioner Chilcott said the amount budgeted for the position is insufficient to get a commitment.

Dr. Bender said something must be done soon, as the flu season is almost upon us. Commissioner Chilcott asked if Dr. Bender would be interested in the position, pending a clarification of the duties. Dr. Bender said he would, depending on the size of the job. He

added that a physician becomes ethically responsible for a patient as soon as a phone call has been accepted. Commissioner Chilcott asked if Dr. Bender would help delineate the job description. Dr. Bender said he would.

Ellyn said Dr. Bender has been an emergency room doctor, but the position of physician to the jail would be more like an office doctor. He could tell a person to go to the emergency room; it would be similar to having a private practice in the jail. There would be no operating room; those cases would be referred to the hospital.

Commissioner Chilcott said the Board of County Commissioners is not in a position to provide the jail with a variety of expensive medical equipment. Getting a health officer is something that must be done for the County.

John said Missoula is an attractive example of blending the position for City and County. Commissioner Chilcott said the Board of County Commissioners discussed a City/County health board, but it didn't work. The City felt all associated costs should be shouldered by the County; the County felt the costs should be shared.

Judy said she talked to Skip about the job description. He suggested an emergency appointment, with no job description. Dr. Bender filled out the application, which got tabled pending a discussion of job blending.

Commissioner Lund suggested getting Dr. Bender on board, and enlisting his help with defining and blending of positions.

Judy said he is covered for insurance with the County, but she is not sure of the jail. Commissioner Lund said the County could step in under our insurance. Commissioner Chilcott asked how Dr. Bender sees the role over the next year as County health officer. Dr. Bender said initially we need to keep doing what has been done, tracking infectious diseases, etc. Judy said food issues have been huge this summer.

Dr. Bender commented on the importance of emergency preparedness; most of the community is ignorant of what constitutes preparedness, which makes the County Health Officer a leadership role in the community. He added frank discussions between the Sheriff and the Board of County Commissioners should be instituted to arrive at answers to the hemorrhaging of funds.

Commissioner Lund made a motion to hire Dr. Bender as temporary health officer for up to one year, at a stipend of \$2000 per month, through the advertising period, effective today. This would include malpractice insurance.

Commissioner Chilcott commented that the Board of Health members present seemed in favor. This would cover the budget side of the issue; the Board of Health has no budget. Commissioner Lund said there is a line item for the health officer.

Commissioner Chilcott suggested the motion should die, since the Board of Health is responsible for and have the authority to hire the County Health Officer.

John said the Board of Health members should have a quick meeting. Commissioner Lund agreed the motion should die.

Judy then asked about the industrial hygienist. Theresa said she produced a copy of the draft contract. Judy asked if it is in the budget. Commissioner Lund said they have a quote, and have budgeted what was required.

Patty said \$240 was budgeted for one day of per diem for the industrial hygienist. John said this cooperation indicates that the Board of Health needs a budget.

Theresa said she has started separating out money for Board of Health variances. She suggested increasing the fees for variances as an option toward a budget. Other counties have done that.

In other business, Commissioner Chilcott attended a special working session for the Board of Health.

Commissioner Lund made a motion to continue the review of the Sheriff's budget until Tuesday, September 19th at 11:00 a.m., due to the Sheriff's absence this morning. Commissioner Chilcott seconded the motion and all voted "aye".

Commissioner Chilcott attended a MR TMA (Transportation Management) meeting during the afternoon hours.

The Board met to continue their public hearing on the Neighborhood Plan from August 24th. Curtis Cook and Francis Besseney present. Commissioner Chilcott was put on a conference call. Commissioner Lund made a motion to close this public hearing due to procedural issues. Commissioner Chilcott seconded the motion and all voted "aye".